



DHS Today via E-mail

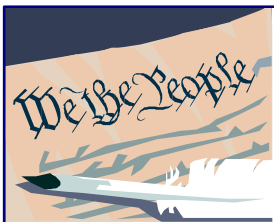
April 27, 2001

Several counties sponsored activities as part of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in April. On April 19, the Searcy County DCFS staff joined students from two local schools, elementary school teachers and other community members on a two mile walk to draw attention to the problem of child abuse. The walk was inspired by a similar march done in Miller County. Searcy County DCFS Supervisor **Nancy Graves**, along with DCFS employees **Kala Padilla**, **Lygia Smith** and **Gayle Connor** planned the community event with Searcy County Administrator **Gary Linn**. Refreshments and door prizes were part of the program. information on a variety of topics including becoming a foster parent, was available for the public to pick up.



Information on a variety of parenting topics was available at the walk in Searcy County.

In Perry County, the DHS County office held a Family Luau from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 21, in the gym at Perry to help show that strengthening families helps prevent child abuse. Guests were encouraged do dress Hawaiian style and organizations from across the county sponsored the event. The day's activities included clowns, games for kids, face painting, a puppet show, as well as information booths with information on recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect.



Several bills passed during the most recent legislative session can have a direct impact on the wallets of DHS employees. Act 762 extends the period an employee can participate in the the Deferred Retirement Option Plan from five to seven years. This act also covers current employees participating in the DROP program. It goes into effect July 1, 2001.

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Act 1410 requires state agencies to develop and implement policies for the management and sale of computer and electronic equipment to help the state gain the most dollars for sale of used equipment. Policies may include the option of first offering used equipment for sale to the agency employees, with the first option going to the primary user of the equipment. Equipment is to be purchased in “as is” condition with no warranty.

Act 1461 covers many amendments to the Uniform Classifications and Compensation Act. Among the most interesting items to employees, the Act increases from 5.5 percent to 8 percent the maximum allowable bonus payment to state employees who meet competency-based criteria under the Career Ladder Incentive Program.

Patreca Adams, a mental health worker at the Arkansas State Hospital in Little Rock, might be getting a new nickname—Ms. Heimlich. For the second time in two months, Patreca successfully used the life-saving Heimlich maneuver to aid a choking victim in the hospital’s dining room. Both victims, one man and one woman, were clients at the hospital who were having dinner at the time they began choking. Patreca works on Unit 3-upper during the 3-11 p.m. shift. Patreca’s skill and attention to clients may have well saved their lives because choking is a leading cause of accidental death. If you’d like to learn how to use the Heimlich maneuver to help a choking victim, contact organizations that teach CPR or any local hospital. Good job, Patreca!



In most counties, being an employee of the Department of Human Services means going beyond the work they do at the office each day. Desha County DHS County Administrator, **Lerone Thomas** and **Katrina Cavaness**, community development specialist, assisted the Boys & Girls Club of McGehee in obtaining a \$2000 grant from the Union Pacific Foundation. Thomas identified the group as a funding source

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for the club and Cavaness assisted in development of the grant proposal. It was submitted in August 2000 and in February, **Lyle Middleton**, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of McGehee, received a hand-delivered check from the foundation. The grant will be used to purchase furnishings for the multi-million dollar facility recently completed.

The new facility was built through a combination of private donations, grants, and a federal appropriation of \$268,000. The club has a kitchen, two computer centers, a gymnasium, and recreational and classroom areas. Approximately 200 school-aged children are served each day and more are expected to use the facility in the future. Participants are eligible for a wide variety of educational and recreational programs including after-school tutoring and homework assistance.

The daughter of a DHS employee recently captured a headline on the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's* sports page. The story was about the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette's Metro High School Basketball team. The headline on the story read, "Omission Can't Stop Hall's Watt," and referred to **Samantha Watt**, daughter of DHS Office of Chief Counsel employee **Vicki Watt**, an administrative law judge in the Appeals and Hearings section in Little Rock. The story went on to read in part: "Little Rock Hall's Samantha Watt made the most of her late addition to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* All-Metro Classic.



Watt, who was inadvertently left off the initial roster because the selection panel thought she was a junior, scored a game-high 14 points while leading the White team to a 70-59 victory over the Copper team Tuesday night at Charles Ripley Arena.

"I was so glad to be on the team," said Watt, who plans to play basketball in college but hasn't chosen a school yet. "I have been practicing every day since the season ended. It was awesome to win."

Dorothy Davis, supervisor of the clerical support staff at the Pulaski County South office in Little Rock, recently took part in the Gates Millennium Scholars program Leadership Conference in Virginia. GMS is a leadership development program sponsored by the United Negro College Fund, Inc. and students are must be nominated to attend it. Dorothy has returned to college as an adult and is a student at Philander Smith College in Little Rock. She has a 4.0 grade point average and hopes to become a teacher.

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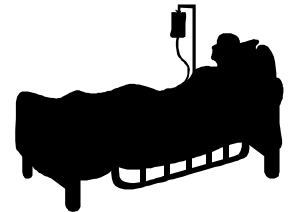
Kids were busy all over America last weekend making a difference in their communities. On April 20 and 21 young people across the nation took part in National Youth Service Day. The event is sponsored by the Corporation for National Service and kicks off National Volunteer Week, April 22-28, 2001. “Change the World—VOLUNTEER!” is the theme for the 28th National Volunteer Week. Each year hundreds of thousands of volunteer across our state volunteer their time and talents to make Arkansas a better place to live. But you don’t need a special day or week to volunteer. Call a church, school or government office in your hometown and see how you can make a difference all year long. If you want to participate in National Youth Service Day next year, visit www.servenet.org to find a project near you or learn about other ways you can volunteer in your area.

Each year, the Division of Medical Services’ Children’s Medical Services program helps thousands of children with special health care needs. Program Director Nancy Church recently received the following letter from the parent of a child who uses the program. It shows just how important the program is to those who need it.

“Dear Ms. Church:

I am writing this letter in appreciation for Children’s Medical Services. Recently my oldest son, age 14, was struck by a car on his way to school in September 2000. He was taken to Children’s Hospital for care. His diagnosis from the doctors was a severe head injury.

The staff at Children’s Hospital was very helpful and caring. Being a single parent and mother of two, I needed help and guidance in this very traumatic experience. With many prayers, help from two physical therapists and the wonderful doctors at Children’s Hospital, I’m glad to say that he is doing well.



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Before the accident my son was very outgoing. He is part of the school band and is also active in the church band. My concern is that he receives the help that he needs to get well from this car accident. A representative from CMS called me at home and shared helpful information with me about camp, support group meetings, financial assistance and the Brain Injury Association. This made such a difference to me as a parent to hear someone care about our needs. I also received helpful information in the mail from CMS letting me know of services that they provide. I thank God for CMS. My son is still in the care of doctors but he's getting better and it's good to know that Children's Medical Services is there to help us and many others. Keep up the good work! Thank you once again."



Do you have something you'd like to share in the newsletter? Send an email to Joyce.Williams@mail.state.ar.us. You can also fax items to (501) 682-6512 or call (501) 682-6580.